1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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233 181 castrated later, are generally cut so that they will grow in a shape that pleases their masters. The operation, called *ngat*, is probably performed towards the end of their first year and usually takes place in the dry season, as it is said that a steer may die if its horns are cut in the rains. The animal is thrown and held down while its horns are cut through obliquely with a spear. They grow against the cut. The beasts appear to suffer much pain during the operation and I have sometimes heard Nuer compare their ordeal to the initiation of youths into manhood.

When a Nuer mentions an ox his habitual moroseness leaves him and he speaks with enthusiasm, throwing up his arms to show you how its horns are trained. 'I have a fine ox', he says, 'a brindled ox with a large white splash on its back and with one horn trained over its muzzle'—and up go his hands, one above his head and the other bent at the elbow across his face. In singing and dancing they call out the names of their oxen and hold their arms in imitation of their horns.

233 181 ●854 The attitude towards cattle varies with varying situations in social life and with changes in social development. As soon as children can crawl they are brought into close intimacy with the flocks and herds. The kraal is their playground and they are generally smeared with dung in which they roll and tumble. The calves and sheep and goats are their companions in play and they pull them about and sprawl in the midst of them. Their feelings about the animals are probably dominated by desire for food, for the cows, ewes, and she-goats directly satisfy their hunger, often suckling them. As soon as a baby can drink animal's milk its mother carries it to the sheep and goats and gives it warm milk to drink straight from the udders.

233 181 857 868 The games of rather older children of both sexes centre round cattle. They build byres of sand in camps and of moistened ashes or mud in villages, and fill the toy kraals with fine mud cows and oxen (Fig. 7), with which they play at herding and marriage. The first tasks of childhood concern cattle. Very small children hold the sheep and goats while their mothers milk them, and when their mothers milk the cows they carry the gourds and pull the calves away from the udders and tether them in front of their dams. They collect urine in gourds and

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
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wives will be fertile. Abortion is said to be very rare and practised only by unmarried girls. Though the men of the kraal may hope that monorchids and babies born with defects and deformities will not survive, they do not kill them or let them die. The proper care and nurture of children is the concern of the whole family and household, and from the moment of birth care is taken to isolate the child from any contact which might be injurious to it. Even the father keeps away from the mother's hut for the first few days lest he inadvertently cause it some misfortune. The prohibition on coitus between parents till the child is weaned is seldom infringed, although it imposes long abstinence, for the child is suckled till he can digest solid food and can toddle about homestead and camp by himself. Artificial aids to weaning are rarely necessary, infants passing slowly from the breast to cow- and goat-milk, though sometimes they are sent to their maternal grandparents for some weeks to make the break. Children have first claim in the allocation of milk from the herd, and if there is a shortage it is the adults, and not they, who go without.

The care of small children falls naturally to the mother, and it is she who feeds and bathes them and attends to their other wants. But the father also takes an interest in his infant children, and one often sees a man nursing his child while the mother is engaged in the tasks of the home. Nuer fathers are proud of their children and give much time to them, petting and spoiling them, giving them titbits, playing with them, and teaching them to talk; and the children are often in the byres with the men. The affection of children for their fathers is very striking in Nuerland. I have never seen a man beat his child or lose his temper with him, however aggravating he might be. When a father speaks crossly to his child, as he does if, let us say, the child goes to the edge of a river or among the cattle, where he may be injured, it is evident that the child is not afraid of his loud words and obeys from affection rather than fear. In his first years a child is corrected by his mother and elder brothers and sisters, who may give him a few strokes with a grass switch if he is naughty.

Daughters grow up under the direction of their mothers. Mother and elder sisters give a girl training in household tasks and what moral advice and worldly wisdom they care to impart. The father takes little interest in the affairs of his daughters. His chief concern with them is to ensure that they are well married.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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252 tray. The dura can be pounded as fine as flour, but that involves much physical labour. The woman frequently chants a song as she pounds.

415 The household furnishings vary in number, but in most of the average homes the following articles which are considered necessary (Fig. 4) by the Nuer are to be found.

A large earthen vessel for carrying water.

An earthen cooking-pot.

A long-necked gourd having a small hole in the end of the neck. This is used as a milk-pail; milk may also be churned in it by taking hold of the neck and shaking the gourd vigorously to and fro.

Several half-gourds of various sizes which are used as dishes for food; the smaller ones may be used as drinking cups.

A number of mussel shells for use as spoons. Spoons are also made of the horn of the antelope.

A clay pipe with a long stem—this is much in evidence.

A large earthen container for dura (kaffir corn).

Network bags made out of grass rope. These are used to hold gourds of various sizes.

A large basket, woven in openwork pattern, to hold various possessions when travelling.

411 A spear and a fishing spear.

A big-headed club, and also smaller clubs.

513 A ring made of cane-leaves is used as a pillow by the women. The pillow for men is made out of a piece of a tree and has three legs. Part of a tree is chosen where the branches fork in the desired direction.

● 854 A baby basket woven of a certain pliable kind of wood, and also a grass mat to cover it with.

352 Skins of sheep are used as rugs to sit on, and the skin of the waterbuck makes an ideal bed.

354 A fire, with earthen shield to protect it from the wind,

Water must be heated in the late afternoon for the baby's bath. 512 854
It is no short process. (Fig. 11)

A MAN'S WORK

A man's work usually begins at sunrise too. He has 512
probably slept in the barn. He arises, covered with cow- [515]
manure ashes. He cleans his teeth with the ash and later
on in the morning may wash his face and hands. While
he may drink a large quantity of water during the day he
seldom drinks any water before breakfast or with a meal.
He usually stays among the cattle until he is called to his [231]
breakfast about nine o'clock. Then he eats and is ready
to spend the day among the cattle. He takes them out to
graze about ten o'clock in the morning and returns with
them in the late afternoon. He loves his cattle. His day is
a happy one spent in their midst, his human companions
being other men who have taken their cattle out to graze
also. His spear and club are ever with him. In the
late afternoon he comes home with his cattle, finding his
supper is being prepared. A plunge in the river every
time he goes to it refreshes him. After supper is over
visiting until bedtime is the usual close of the work of the
average day.

The day's work may be varied if any of his cattle are 512
sick or if there is a dance which he wishes to attend. Or 691
maybe the District Commissioner is in the village hearing
cases or collecting taxes, and so he joins the throng and
spends his day listening to the cases or bringing up some
case of his own before this representative of the Govern-
ment.

During the planting season, the fishing season, or the 512
season when the dura must be cut, this daily programme
of the Nuer man differs and his work for the day may be a
little more strenuous.

by the children falls to her. When just a little girl she must take a gourd and carry water, learning to balance it on her head. She must help to care for the baby, carrying it astride one hip, with her arm around it. Cane-stalks must be brought for fuel, or she may accompany her mother when she goes to the forest to get wood. She gathers sticks of wood, binding them together with grass, and carries them home on her head. Or she may accompany her mother when she goes out to cut grass for roofing the houses. She early learns to carry her burden poised on top of her head. 857 [854]

As she grows older she learns to pound dura and to sift and cook it. She learns all the art of the Nuer housekeeper and, indeed, soon becomes a small replica of her mother.

The little girls play 'keeping house' and imitate their mothers to the best of their ability.

The older girls of the village usually have a house given them for sleeping quarters. [519]

As the girl grows older she learns to smoke the family pipe and becomes as attached to it as her mother is. [276]

When she is twelve or thirteen years old she begins to observe the age-old customs which until then she has been able to ignore. For instance, now she must never eat before a boy of her own age or older. Furthermore, she must never see him eat if there is any possibility that he may some day be a suitor for her hand in marriage. [264]

She bleaches her hair and adorns her body with all possible ornaments. She dons her grass skirts and attends dances now. Her father and brothers are interested in giving her beads and other ornaments, for a well-favoured girl will bring more cattle when the marriage price is discussed. Her father and brothers are dictators as to what she may do and as to what plans may be made 857 593

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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She continues her work the same as usual before the baby's advent. Some neighbour woman who has helped other children into the world is probably on hand to help usher hers in. But the help given is negligible. They await nature's process, sometimes holding the mother up in a sitting posture with just her feet touching the ground. A sheep may be sacrificed to expedite matters. 843 844

When the child is born the cord is cut with a knife or a sharp piece of cane. It is not tied, and does not bleed. 844

The mother's food consists of gruel for some days. Then she resumes her usual diet. She cares for her baby, the neighbour woman or her mother bathing it for her for several weeks. She feeds the baby whenever it cries and usually gives it cow's milk until she has enough of her own for it. 846 853

When preparing the bath for the baby an earthen pot of water is heated. The baby is bathed in the late afternoon. The body is thoroughly greased all over, then the water (to us it seems like quite hot water) is splashed upon it, while the one who is bathing the baby rubs it briskly, massaging its back especially. Then when this part of the bath is over, she washes the child's eyes by licking them with her tongue, much as a cat would do with its kitten. The nose is also cleaned in like manner. 854

Various plans are resorted to in order to guard the baby from the evil eye. Charms are put upon its body, being fastened to necklace or wristlet. A rope is stretched out in the yard so that passers-by will know that strangers are not welcome.

The young mother sends word to her husband when she wants him to know about the birth of the child, so that he may come. No one asks whether it is a boy or a girl. The father may bring his wife a present of fish, and he may try to keep her supplied with fish for a little while. 846

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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THE CARE OF BABIES

854 A basket made of branches of a pliable wood is used as a baby-basket. A piece of animal skin which has had the hair scraped off, and is smooth, is put in the basket for the baby to lie on. If the mother has a piece of cloth she may cover the baby with it. Then a large woven grass mat is placed on top of the basket, being rolled up at each side until it just covers the top of the basket and keeps the sun off the baby and also keeps an active baby from sitting up in the basket while being carried. The mother always holds the side of the basket with one hand while carrying the baby in it upon her head.

When she arrives at her destination she carefully lowers the basket to the ground and unties the strings which hold the mat secure, and peeps at the baby. If it is asleep she unrolls the ends of the mat and lets them down to the ground at either side so that the baby may sleep undisturbed by light or sound. But if the baby is awake she carefully pulls the cloth or sheepskin covering that is over the upper part of her body round in front of her and over the baby-basket, and lifts up the baby under the cloth into her lap, so that no one—especially one with the evil eye—may see it.

A rattle is made by taking a small gourd which has a neck to it and putting a few pebbles in it. This is shaken vigorously when the child is crying.

A pacifier may be made for an older child (at least one year old or older) by taking the neck of a small gourd and cutting it off about one inch from the end. This may then be fastened to the wrist of the child with a string of beads and is ever ready when desired.

A little child is often given a strand of its mother's beads to play with, but its playthings are few.

846 The mother wears a leather belt with a border of shells;

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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she may call herself 'a woman who has just given birth to a child' for months afterwards, and try to solicit privileges on that account. 846

Nuer mothers love their babies and try to do all they can in their limited way for them. Whatever the child may lack, it does not lack its mother's love while she is living. But if the mother dies life is a different thing for the child that is left. A new-born baby demands food, and the artificial feeding of babies is an art entirely unknown to the Nuer. What to do with the small piece of humanity is a serious proposition. 854

Rumour says that they may bury the new-born baby with the dead mother, arguing that it will die soon anyhow, but I do not know of any authentic case where the live child has been buried. It is, however, very true that the motherless baby soon follows its mother. Five motherless infants have been brought to the mission at Nasser, as the people know that the art of the artificial feeding of infants is not unknown there. Two of these babies died, while three have lived so far. 847 165

TWINS

Twins are not uncommon, but are usually a cause of distress to their parents, for they are sure that one will die—and it usually does fail to survive. The mother always nurses one child at one breast and the second child at the other breast, and thus divides the supply of food as evenly as she can between them. 845 [853]

When a man is the father of twins, his brother will sacrifice a sheep before he eats with him so that no harm may come to the babies.

The Nuer has a superstition in regard to the burial of new-born twins. Rumour says that they prefer to tie the hands together and hang them up in a tree rather than 766

owner killed a man of another district, he began a feud and was liable to be killed by the kin of his victim. It seems that fetish owners were treated differently in different areas. Many people possess medicines which protect them from fetishes. 754

Death may be due to one of three causes: *olic kwoth* (a sickness of god), sorcery and the evil eye, or sickness due to fetishes. This last is sudden and may kill a man quickly, whereas a sickness sent by god is usually prolonged.(1) A man believing himself to be ill on account of a fetish summons a fetish owner to discover whose fetish is responsible. When this is known a sacrifice is made to the fetish and its owner is asked to stop it troubling the sick man. 754 753

When a fetish owner dies, his medicines are preserved until his spirit enter into one of his descendants who will then become a fetish owner in his stead. A man may purchase a fetish from another; the medicine is only the habitation of the fetish spirits who exist apart from it. The Nuer believe that a fetish kills someone because its owner dislikes him. 754

The Nuer Ghoul

Many of the Nilotic tribes believe in ghouls who feed on the bodies of those recently dead. This belief is found among the Acholi, Anuak, Shilluk, Lango, Dinka and Nuer. The Nuer ghoul is called the *rodh* and is regarded with horror by the people. The practice of ghoulist activities is to some extent hereditary, for the potentiality is found in certain lineages, but a man may become a *rodh* even if he is not a member of such a lineage. Disinterment of the dead is regarded as his most horrible activity.

A *rodh* may be killed by common consent and, although no blood must be spilt, he may be beaten to death with sticks without fear of revenge. This is the only instance among the Nuer of killing which does not demand compensation or vengeance.

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

In childbirth a woman is attended by a female relative who is herself already a mother. The child's incisor teeth are removed at the age of eight years. 844 854 304

The birth of twins constitutes a danger to their family; special decorations are worn by the kinsmen, animals are sacrificed, and ritual prohibitions observed. As do other Nilotic groups, the Nuer believe that the parents are safe if the twins are of opposite sexes, for the boy will want to preserve his father and the girl her mother. In spite of the dangers, however, the Nuer are joyful at the birth of twins if they both live. Throughout life, twins are subject to certain ritual observances; before a twin can get married they must both together go through a fictional 845 582

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *S.N.R.*, 1935, p.74.